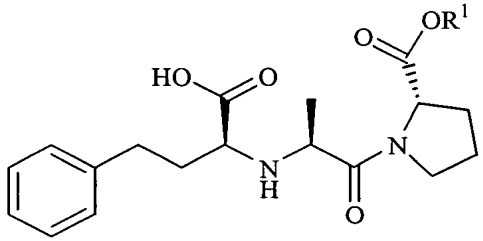
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Original): A proline ester represented by the following formula (I):



(I)

wherein R^1 represents a hydroxy-lower alkyl group, a lower alkoxy-lower alkyl group, or a lower alkoxy-lower alkoxy-lower alkyl group or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 2 (Original): The proline ester as described in claim 1, which is selected from the group consisting of 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 2-hydroxyethyl ester, 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 3-hydroxypropyl ester, 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 4-hydroxybutyl ester, 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 2-(2-methoxyethoxy)ethyl ester, and 1-[N-[(1S)-1-Carboxy-3-phenylpropyl]-L-alanyl]-L-proline 2-methoxyethyl ester, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): A drug comprising a proline ester as recited in claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): A percutaneous preparation comprising a proline ester as recited in claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claim 5 (Original): The percutaneous preparation as described in claim 4, which is a patch.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The percutaneous preparation as described in claim 4, which comprises one or more percutaneous absorption enhancers selected from the group consisting of a fatty acid ester and a non-ionic surfactant.

Claim 7 (Original): The percutaneous preparation as described in claim 6, wherein the percutaneous absorption enhancer is selected from the group consisting of isopropyl myristate, lauromacrogol, lauric acid diethanolamide, glyceryl monocaprylate, glyceryl monolaurate, sorbitan monocaprylate, and polyoxyethylene sorbitan monooleate.

Claims 8-10 (Cancelled)

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): A method for treating a pathological condition affected or induced by activation of an ACE comprising:

administering to a subject in need thereof an effective amount of a proline ester of claim 1 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof;

wherein the pathological condition is selected from the group consisting of hypertension, a cardiac disease, nephritis, and apoplexy~~, cardiac hypertrophy, cardiac failure, and myocardial infarct~~.

Claims 12-17 (Cancelled):

Claim 18 (New): The method of Claim 11, comprising treating a cardiac disease selected from the group consisting of cardiac hypertrophy, cardiac failure, and myocardial infarct.

Claim 19 (New): The method of claim 11 or 18, wherein administration is performed percutaneously.

Claim 20 (New): The proline ester of Claim 1, wherein R^1 represents a hydroxy-lower alkyl group.

Claim 21 (New): The proline ester of Claim 1, wherein R^1 represents a lower alkoxy-lower alkyl group.

Claim 22 (New): The proline ester of Claim 1, wherein R^1 represents a lower alkoxy-lower alkoxy-lower alkyl group.